The Bayou Observer

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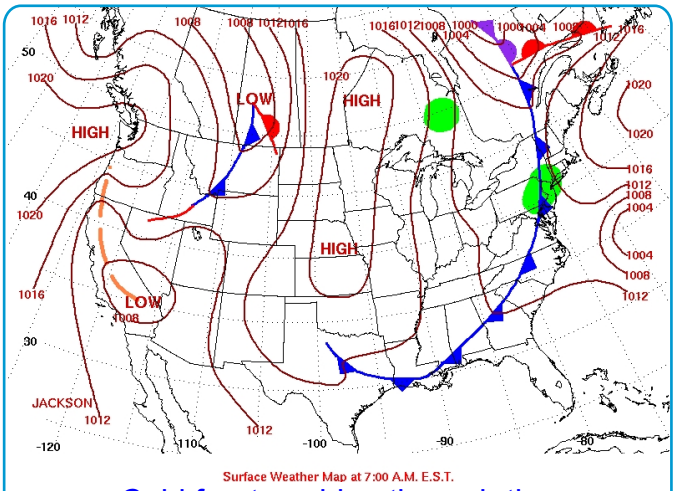
htpp://www.srh.noaa.gov/lix/

Serving South Mississippi
&
Southeast Louisiana

Summer Cold Fronts How (Un)Common Are They, and What Do They Mean to Hurricane Season?

Freddie Zeigler

In August 2009, three cold fronts pushed through Southeast Louisiana and Southern Mississippi, presenting some relief from the heat. A stubborn upper level trough over the Eastern United States kept the New England states cool this summer and allowed the cold fronts to push into the Deep South. While summer cold fronts may drop the humidity values down for a few days, they generally do not affect temperatures as much. Contrary to this statement, the frontal passage on August 22, 2009 was strong and resulted in a few areas experiencing morning lows in the upper 50s. These temperatures were low enough to set new record lows across parts of Southern Mississippi and Southeast Louisiana.



Cold front pushing through the Central Gulf Coast August 22, 2009

How rare are cold fronts in August? In the past five years in August, there have been eleven cold frontal passages through this area. About nine fronts merely dropped humidity values. However, the frontal passages on August 22, 2009 and August 12, 2004 were very strong. In both events, locals turned off their air conditioners and enjoyed a taste of fall in August. Meteorologically, deep upper level troughs over the Eastern United States were common in both weather events. In addition, in both cases these troughs assisted the frontal push into the Central Gulf of Mexico.

While many of the locals will tell you that our hurricane season ends with the first cold front, a frontal passage in August or September does not necessarily result in a diminished hurricane threat along the Central Gulf Coast for the rest of the hurricane season. For example, during the hurricane season of 2002, cold fronts pushed through or stalled over the area on August 8th, August 27th, September 7th and September 12th. However, Tropical Storm Isidore made landfall on the Central Gulf Coast September 26th, followed by Hurricane Lili on October 3rd.

All in all, while summer cold fronts can provide some relief from heat and high humidity, they do not always signal the end of hurricane season.

The Bayou Observer

Inside this issue:

LIX who's who

Phil Grigsby

There have been plenty of staffing changes at WFO LIX over the past few years. Some of our former team members have joined the ranks of those living the good life in retirement while others have moved on to new offices and are now serving the public in other areas of the country. Though the faces at LIX may have changed, our mission remains the same: we are committed to protecting lives and property by providing you with the most accurate and up to date weather warnings, forecasts and information we can. In each issue of the Bayou Observer, we spotlight a few of our top notch team members.

Patricia Brown is the Senior Service Hydrologist (SSH) at WFO LIX. As the Senior Service Hydrologist, Pat is in charge of the office's hydrology program, including procurement and maintenance of gauges and other equipment in the office's hydrologic service area (which extends slightly beyond the local forecast area). The SSH will also provide training and consult the working meteorologists about flood potential and guidance. Pat has been with WFO LIX since 2002. Prior to joining the WFO LIX staff, she worked at the Jackson, MS forecast office and the Southeast River Forecast Center in Atlanta, GA.

Patricia Brown

Francida Moore

Francida Moore is the Observing Program Leader (OPL) at WFO LIX. The Observing Program Leader position was designed to replace the Data Acquisition Program Manager or DAPM position. The OPL ensures that a full range of technical support and assistance is provided for WFO operations and other basic activities, especially the incorporation of timely, high quality observational data into WFO forecast and warning decision-making processes. The OPL also is the manager for the hydrometeorological technician and intern unit. Francida has been working at WFO LIX since the early 1980s and was a hydrometeorological technician before being promoted to the OPL position in 2008.

Mark “Wayne” Hall is the Electronic Systems Analyst (ESA) at WFO LIX. The ESA is responsible for the oversight and management of all electronic programs in our office. As the ESA, Wayne ensures that all the technology we use functions properly and is current or ahead of the other offices in the NWS. Our office is used as a test-bed for a variety of new technology and we pride ourselves on our ability to adapt and incorporate the latest technology with what we already have. Wayne began his career with the National Weather Service in 1980 and has been a part of the WFO LIX staff ever since. Before joining the staff here, Wayne was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base in Alexandria, Louisiana from 1972 until 1980.

Wayne Hall

LIX in the Community
Past Outreach Events

Danielle Manning

The summer months proved to be busy in the outreach arena. Here is a summary of a few events. During the months of June and July, forecasters from WFO LIX were invited to discuss the marine forecasting program with two different US Coast Guard Auxiliary units. During the presentations for Flotillas 4-3 and 4-9, NWS forecasters discussed marine forecast and warning products and also discussed some of the challenges forecasters face when issuing these products.

In early August, the NWS also sponsored a booth at the Esplanade Mall's Hurricane Expo in Kenner, LA. During the event, staff members answered questions about the hurricanes and hurricane season, and handed out numerous informational brochures concerning hurricane awareness and preparedness. Around 100 people stopped by the NWS booth to look at the satellite imagery and radar displays, and to gather vital safety information for the current hurricane season.

In addition to giving presentations and sponsoring booths at external events, WFO LIX also hosted several groups of people wanting tours of the office. During office tours, guests get a first-hand glimpse of NWS operations and learn about the forecast process. Depending on what time the groups arrive at the office, they are also sometimes able to watch an NWS employee release the weather balloon to take an upper-air observation. If you are interested in touring the WFO LIX office, please send us an email at <SR-LIX.Webmaster@noaa.gov> or call the office at 504-522-7330 or 985-649-0429.

Future Outreach Events

On October 3, WFO LIX will participate in the Home Depot Kids' Safety Fair at the Home Depot on Gause Blvd. in Slidell, LA from 10am until 2pm. At the event, NWS staff members will be on hand to answer children's questions (and adults' too) about weather and weather safety. Hopefully, we'll be able to bring our hurricane toss which is always a hit! Additionally, there will be informational brochures on hand for the adults and activity booklets for the kids.

October 17, will be a busy day with WFO LIX participating in two different outreach events. WFO LIX will open its doors to visitors at the Slidell Air Show on October 17. Visitors will be able to meet some of the forecasters and see brief presentations concerning a typical day at the NWS. Additionally, staff members from WFO LIX (and the collocated river forecast center) will be staffing a booth at the annual “Wild Things” event. This event is held at the Southeast Louisiana Refuges Headquarters in Lacombe, Louisiana. The event is sponsored by the US Fish and Wildlife Services and will feature several informational displays and activities. The NWS booth will feature several children's activities as well as informational brochures.

OUTREACH

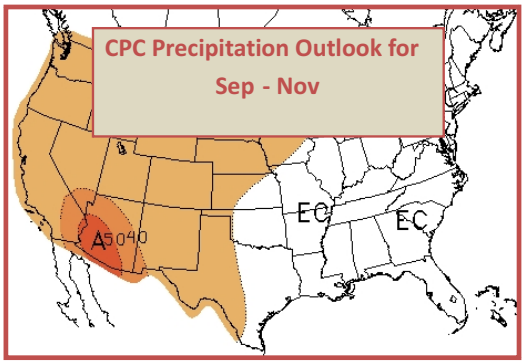
Finally, on November 17, one of our forecasters will be participating in Hahnville High School's Freshman Career Day. Students with an interest in the weather will learn more about what meteorologists at the NWS do on a daily basis and what is required to become an NWS employee.

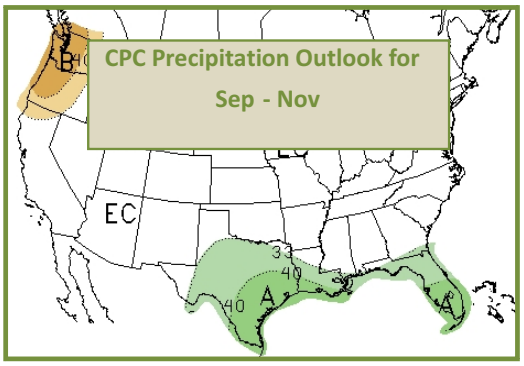
For more information about these and other outreach events, please contact our office. You can reach us by email at <SR-LIX.Webmaster@noaa.gov> or by phone at 504-522-7330 or 985-649-0429.

Fall Climatology Corner

Robert Ricks

The autumn months in the Gulf States can be the calmest and mildest time of the year, weather wise. However, the increased frequency of cold frontal passages with cooler and drier air can often be preceded by strong to severe thunderstorms typically aligned in squall lines. Rain and thunder days become confined to frontal passages less frequent than the daily gulf breeze regimes of summer. Daylight also grows shorter each day as the sun crosses the equator on the first day of autumn and will continue to lessen a minute or two each day until the start of winter the shortest day of the year. In 2009, autumn officially starts on September 22nd at 4:18 pm CDT and continues until the winter solstice on December 21st at 11:47 am CST. Seasonal climatology is usually grouped into four equal monthly segments, with autumn typically considered the months of September through November.





The 2009 autumn season will be highlighted by a moderate El Nino episode, a warm water phenomenon that occurs in the Pacific Ocean near the equator that has a large affect on the weather patterns across the United States and other parts of the world. A typical El Nino autumn features wetter than normal conditions in the south, particularly near the Gulf Coast. Average seasonal temperatures during an El Nino are typically mild by comparison to non-El Nino years as the upper steering patterns become well established farther north. The NOAA-NWS Climate Prediction Center (CPC) indicates an equal chance (33 percent) of either attaining near normal, below normal or above normal temperatures this fall, due primarily to a large degree of variability in temperatures during El Nino autumns. There is a lesser degree of variability in rainfall patterns during El Nino autumns in the south, and the CPC indicates a 40 percent or greater chance of attaining above normal rainfall in the central Gulf States this autumn.

September			
	High Temp (deg F)	Low Temp (deg F)	Precipitation (inches)
Normal	86-88	66-71	4.8-6.2
Record	90-93	60-65	20-25

October			
	High Temp (deg F)	Low Temp (deg F)	Precipitation (inches)
Normal	77-80	55-60	2.9-3.8
Record	82-86	45-52	9-14

November			
	High Temp (deg F)	Low Temp (deg F)	Precipitation (inches)
Normal	69-72	48-52	4.8-5.1
Record	75-77	35-40	13-18

Average temperatures and precipitation for the autumn months can be found in the accompanying tables. Temperature ranges are given in the 4-5 degree increment that best captures the values for the entire area (using New Orleans, Baton Rouge, McComb and Gulfport as the basis). Actual normal values and record values may fall outside of these ranges.